

grew older he only held it more and more strongly. When Archbishop Sudbury was murdered by the mob, in his double capacity of Primate and Chancellor, Wycliffe, much as he deprecated the act, could not refrain from remarking that the Archbishop died in sin, holding the most secular post in the kingdom.¹ The violence of Wycliffe's language against the worldliness of the prelates was equalled by similar complaints of Bishop Brunton, as orthodox a Catholic as ever wore the mitre.² The poet Gower, who wished for ecclesiastical reform on old Catholic lines, raised the same complaint that the Bishops served two masters, God and the world.³

"While reformers of such very different types saw in the worldly avocations of churchmen a grave injury to religion, the system was being criticised by the laity from the layman's point of view. The monopolisation of all secretarial work by the clergy, and of the principal offices of State by the Bishops, necessary as it once was, would have become a serious check to progress if it had been perpetuated. The time was now come for some protest to be made. There were ready to hand intelligent and highly trained lawyers, like Knyvet, and gentlemen, like Scrope, well capable of conducting the business of the country. It was by the help of this class of public servant that England afterwards rose to greatness, and by this class her affairs are still honourably conducted. The petition of the Commons against the tenure of office by the clergy was therefore not altogether a mistake. It was a step in the right direction, although it was found undesirable to sever the connection of the clergy with the public offices at one blow. The result of the petition of 1371 was that for some time laity alternated with clergy. Now a lawyer, now a bishop, now a knight held the Chancellor's Seal or the Treasurer's staff.

One spiritual duty which the Bishops conspicuously neglected, with important consequences to the nation, was to administer justice in their Courts Christian. As might be expected, they themselves had not time to preside in person, but committed their powers to delegates. Before these tri-

¹ *De Officio Regis* (1379), 27-9 ; *Pol. Works*, i. 243-4, 273-81;

De Blas., 194.

* *O. JB. B.*, 79-81. * *Vox Clam.*, bk. iii.; *Con/. Am.*, Prologue, 32.